

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A secure on-line system for printing value bearing items (VBI) comprising:

a client system for interfacing with a plurality of users; and

a server system for communicating with the client system over a communication network comprising:

a secure database remote from the users including a data record for each of the users; and

a plurality of cryptographic modules, each of the plurality of cryptographic modules for authenticating, processing value for the VBI, and generating indicia data for the plurality of users, wherein before each of the authentication, processing value, and generating indicia data for a given user is performed, ~~the respective~~ an available cryptographic module retrieves the data record for the given user directly from the database.

2.-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) The secure on-line system of claim 1, further comprising computer executable code for an asynchronous dynamic password verification to terminate a user session if the password authentication fails.

6. (Currently Amended) The secure on-line system of claim 1, wherein the database stores a first set of one or more last database transactions and each of the cryptographic modules stores a second set of one or more last database transactions for comparison with the first set of one or more last database transactions stored in the database to verify each database transaction.

7. (Currently Amended) The secure on-line system of claim 6, wherein each of the cryptographic modules prevents further database transactions if the second set of one or more

last transaction stored in the cryptographic module does not match with the first set of one or more last transaction stored in the database.

8. (Currently Amended) The secure on-line system of claim 6, wherein the database stores a table including the respective information about a last transaction and a verification module to compare the information saved in the module with the information saved in the database.

9. (Currently Amended) The secure on-line system of claim 1, further comprising a back up database server connected to the server system for periodically backing up the data stored in the database in a back up database.

10. (Currently Amended) The secure on-line system of claim 9, further comprising a cryptographically protected transaction log stored in the back up database.

11.-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) The secure on-line system of claim 1, wherein each of the cryptographic modules includes a data validation subsystem to verify that data is up to date and an auto-recovery subsystem for allowing the module to automatically re-synchronize the module with the data.

18.-21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) The secure on-line system of claim 1, wherein each of the cryptographic modules includes a computer executable code for detecting errors and preventing a compromise of data or critical cryptographic security parameters as a result of the errors.

23.-41. (Cancelled)

42. (Currently Amended) The secure on-line system of claim 1, wherein the server system further comprises one or more of a postal server subsystem, a provider server subsystem, an e-commerce subsystem, a staging subsystem, a client support subsystem, a decision support subsystem, a SMTP subsystem, an address matching service subsystem, a SSL proxy server subsystem, and a web server subsystem.

43.-49. (Cancelled)

50. (Currently Amended) A method for securely printing value-bearing items (VBI) via a communication network including a client system and a server system including a plurality of cryptographic modules, the method comprising the steps of:

interfacing with a plurality of users via the client system;

communicating with the client system over the communication network;

storing a data record for each of the plurality of users in a database;

directly retrieving the data record for a given user from the database for authenticating the given user, processing value for the VBI and generating indicia data for the given user, by [[a]] any available cryptographic module of the plurality of cryptographic modules;

~~directly retrieving for a second time the data record for the given user from the database for processing value for the VBI for the given user by the cryptographic module;~~

~~updating, and storing back in the database, the data record for the given user after processing value for the given user;~~

~~directly retrieving for a third time the updated data record for the given user from the database for generating indicia data for the given user by the cryptographic module; and~~

~~updating the data record, and storing back in the database, the updated data record for the given user after generating indicia data for the given user.~~

51. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising the step of encrypting each database transaction ~~by a cryptographic module~~.

52. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising the steps of storing one or more last database transactions in the database;

storing one or more last database transactions in a cryptographic module; and
comparing the one or more last database transactions stored in the database with the one or more last database transactions stored in [[a]] the available cryptographic module to verify each database transaction.

53.-54. (Cancelled)

55. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising the steps of storing one or more last database transactions in the database, storing one or more last database transactions in [[a]] the available cryptographic module for comparison with the one or more last database transactions stored in the database to verify each database transaction.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55, further comprising the step of preventing further database transactions if the one or more last transaction stored in the cryptographic module does not match with the one or more last transaction stored in the database.

57. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising the step of storing a table including the respective information about a last transaction and comparing the information saved in [[a]] the available cryptographic module with the information saved in the database.

58. (Original) The method of claim 50, further comprising the step of backing up data stored in the database in a back up database.

59. (Original) The method of claim 58, further comprising the step of recovering data from the back up database by decrypting an encrypted transaction log stored in the back up database.

60.-121. (Cancelled)